Mountain Weather Forecast

Lake District National Park

Forecast valid from 00:00 on Saturday 20 Jan 2024 until 23:59 on Sunday 21 Jan 2024

Forecast Issued on Friday 19 Jan 2024 at 14:03

Confidence: High for an unsettled and windy westerly pattern for the coming days, but lowering for the detail of transitions between the worst of conditions.

Headline for Saturday 20 Jan 2024: Turning overcast and windy with rain and summit snow, heavy at times, coupled with severe windchill at height.

Mountain weather hazards on Saturday 20 Jan 2024

Blizzards
No Likelihood

Gales
Low Likelihood

Thunderstorms
No Likelihood

Heavy persistent snow
Low Likelihood

Severe chill effect
Medium Likelihood

Heavy persistent rain
Medium Likelihood

Storm force winds
No Likelihood

Poor visibility
High Likelihood

Strong sunlight
No Likelihood

Weather and chance of precipitation at 800m							
Time							
00:00	03:00	06:00	09:00	12:00	15:00	18:00	21:00
Cloudy	Light snow	Sleet	Sleet	Sleet	Sleet	Heavy snow	Heavy snow
Precipitation probability							
10%	30%	80%	90%	80%	60%	80%	90%

Forecast for Saturday 20 Jan 2024

Weather: Cloudy to overcast and windy with periods of rain and summit snow which turns heavy at times, particularly during the morning and evening. Snow level by day 800m plus.

Chance of cloud-free hill tops above 800m: 10-20%

Low cloud and visibility: Good becoming moderate or poor in rain, very poor in snow and within cloud with bases soon becoming quite extensive from 600m.

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Mountain Weather Forecast

Forecast for Saturday 20 Jan 2024

Height (m)	Wind Speed mean/gusts (mph)					Wind Direction (blowing from)			
	00:00	03:00	06:00	09:00	12:00	15:00	18:00	21:00	00:00
900	41/51 SW	45/56 SW	47/59 SW	51/65 SW	50/64 SW	47/60 SW	47/61 S	45/59 S	48/63 S
600	31/43 SW	35/48 SW	39/54 SW	42/58 SW	40/55 SW	37/52 SW	39/54 S	37/52 S	36/52 S
300	10/34 SW	12/36 SW	16/44 SW	16/45 SW	17/45 SW	16/43 SW	18/45 S	18/44 S	15/42 S
Valley	11/32 SW	13/34 SW	17/40 SW	19/44 SW	20/44 SW	18/41 SW	20/43 S	20/44 S	19/43 S

Height (m)	Temperature / Feels Like (°C)								
	00:00	03:00	06:00	09:00	12:00	15:00	18:00	21:00	00:00
900	-1/-10	-0/-10	0/-9	1/-8	1/-8	1/-8	0/-9	-1/-10	-1/-10
600	2/-6	2/-6	2/-6	3/-5	3/-4	3/-4	2/-6	1/-7	1/-7
300	4/-0	4/-1	4/-1	4/-1	5/-0	5/0	4/-1	3/-2	3/-2
Valley	6/3	6/3	6/2	7/2	7/2	7/3	6/2	6/1	6/1
Freezing Level*	700m	900m	1000m	1100m	1200m	1100m	1000m	900m	1000m

**Level above which ground is expected to be frozen/snow is expected to settle.*

Meteorologist's View

Difficult conditions with quite extensive hill fog, heavy rain, summit snow and strong winds which bring severe windchill.

Forecast for Sunday 21 Jan 2024

Weather: Brighter spells and scattered showers at first. Periods of heavy rain developing for the afternoon, breaking to showers during the evening, bringing the risk of hail and thunder. In addition severe gale to storm force winds late in the day, adding to the difficulties as Storm Isha affects the area. Snow initially across highest peaks, otherwise rain at all levels.

Maximum wind: Southwest strong at first increasing gradually bringing severe gale to storm force winds for the evening with gusts in excess of 70mph across more exposed ridges and summits.

Chance of cloud-free hill tops above 800m: 75% at first becoming 10% during the afternoon

Low cloud and visibility: Good becoming moderate or poor in rain, very poor in snow and within cloud with bases occasionally down to 600m during the morning, becoming extensive for the afternoon with patches lower down also.

Temperature: **Valleys:** Plus 1 Celsius increasing 10 Celsius
At 800m: Plus 1 Celsius increasing 5 Celsius
Freezing level: 1000m plus

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Mountain Weather Forecast

Ground Conditions Supplement

Date: Friday 19 January Location: Helvellyn summit at 11:35 Full report: This report comes with a health warning in that, at the time of writing, Saturday's forecast is for storm to gale force winds accompanied with precipitation which will fall as snow above 700m, so walkers out on Saturday are liable to find different conditions to those experienced and described today. There is snow in the Lake District down to valley level, although with the temperatures rising a slow daytime thaw was occurring below 300m. The snow was, and is, being redistributed, most noticeably at altitude, on 30-40mph WSW winds. Consequently, although the average snow depth rises with height, the actual depth encountered varies considerably from little to nothing on windswept areas – such as the tops of some W-SW facing slopes and parts of the summit plateau – to deep drifts easily able to swallow a 60cm ice axe with an extremely rough average being around 8 to10cm at 900m. The deepest drifts are in sheltered spots and hollows and on steep north and especially east facing slopes – such as the exits to both Striding and Swirral Edges. Unstable layers of snow (windslab) have also developed in such areas. The snow at altitude was mainly non-weight baring and breaking trail through the deeper drifts was heavy going and energy sapping. Extra time and Kendal Mint cake (other calorific snacks are available) should be allowed for this. There has been over the past couple of days a noticeable contrast in underfoot conditions with the dividing line being between 400m and 500m. Below this height, most noticeably at and around valley level, there was a thaw on Tuesday followed by a hard freeze. This has resulted in hard snow and ice especially where the snow has been compacted on popular routes – including pavements and untreated roads. This ice will obviously take longer to thaw as temperatures rise. Above 400-500m, the snow is soft, unless compacted, and there has been little to no ice. Although this is still generally the case, some ice was encountered at altitude today most noticeably where the sun had temporarily thawed the snow then it had frozen overnight. Cracks have appeared in some of the weak cornices (snow overhangs) that have formed above steep north and especially east facing slopes – such as above Helvellyn's east face. There are footprints far too close to this edge – especially by Helvellyn's Trig point. If ascending from the popular western (Thirlmere) side it is not immediately obvious that the edge is corniced so please keep well clear of such snow covered edges and advise those with less experience to do likewise – honestly, they WILL thank you for it! Upland tarns. such as Red Tarn, have either partially or fully frozen but are not safe to walk on – especially as temperatures rise. Full winter clothing (waterproofs, extra warm layers, hat & gloves), mountain boots and equipment including a torch, map and compass are all essential to safely roam the fells. Owing to the amount of ice on paths at lower elevations and compacted snow on popular routes, microspikes and walking poles are strongly recommended, especially in descent; they were the tools of choice for the assessor today! Crampons and an ice axe are essential for those attempting, or traversing, steep and exposed routes together with winter mountaineering experience including the ability to assess the stability, or otherwise, of snow slopes – especially east facing ones. As mentioned, conditions at altitude on Saturday are forecast to be extremely challenging. Snow covered ground obscuring landmarks combined with blizzard conditions above 700m are liable to create near or actual whiteout conditions. The ability to navigate in such conditions will be essential, or the willingness to leave your fell top adventure for a more pleasant and infinitely more enjoyable day! For those who do venture out on Saturday, a good sense of humour will certainly help!Temperature: minus 3.1C, Maximum wind speed 41.4mph, Wind chill: minus 14.9C, Average wind speed: 34.2mph

Issued at: 1403 on Fri 19 Jan 2024

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